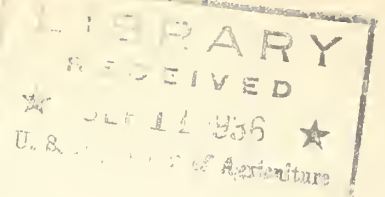


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6-18-36  
SOME VIEWS ON FARM LIFE



A radio talk by C. B. Smith, Extension Service, USDA, delivered during the 4-H Club program of the National Farm and Home Hour, Saturday, August 1, 1936, and broadcast by NBC and a network of associated radio stations.

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I, personally, like to farm. I am a farm owner as well as an Extension official. I get a thrill in the building up of the soil and seeing good crops grow. I find mental stimulus in planning the rotation of crops and the days, weeks, and years of farm work. I do not want to get so physically exhausted on the farm that I can't read a little at night or at noon or ramble over the farm or along the stream that runs through it after supper. About 8 hours a day is all I want to work. Then I want to read and explore and play.

My philosophy of rural life calls for a good living, with a fair income on the farm and some leisure to observe and study. Knowledge and culture lie about one on the farm if he knows how to get them. In my thinking, every farm man, woman, and child should have sufficient leisure on the farm to make intimate acquaintance with the things of nature in which he or she is daily immersed -- the plants, the birds, the rocks, and the soil, and such things.

The common plants of the field and wood are not common if you know something about them -- if you can call them by name and know how they seed and grow and what they are good for. Insects are not just bugs if you know something about them, their transformation and uses. Soils are not just dirt if you know their kinds and uses, how they are made up, and the elements composing them. Country life never will be to us farm folks what it can be until it is realized that in these common things that surround us throughout our whole lives lie knowledge, beauty, joy, and truth, the greatest satisfactions of any life. My philosophy of life makes provision for teaching every farm boy and girl these things and they must be as much a part of the life of the women folks on the farm as of the men. If the farm woman is dissatisfied, there is no contentment for the farmer on the farm, and the town is the ultimate end. As an Extension official, we desire to see country life so developed on the farm that both men and women may find their greatest satisfaction there and not have to move to town.

To this end, it is our belief that conveniences in the home are as essential as conveniences on the farm. Sociability by way of teas and parties is as essential to the women folks on the farm as hunting and fishing trips are to the men and boys. The home should be beautiful, made so with shrubs, lawns, flowers, and trees without, and orderliness, cleanliness, peace and welcome within. It is in the home that we spend most of our lives; why not make it a fine home?

The bounteous table is a vital part of the satisfying rural home. It contributes to hospitality. Hospitality means new people within the home. New people mean new ideas. New ideas mean progress for the farm family.

Company in the home calls for our best manners and the courtesies of

(over)

life. A bountiful table is one to be lingered over. It means sociability. It is there that the things of the farm, the community, and the State are discussed. There the character of children is developed. Whoever neglects the bountiful farm table and the sociability, the good fellowship that go with it, loses at least 70 percent of the satisfaction of rural life. Let's live well on the farm, even if we don't make much money.

Looking toward the future, we see more mechanized farms and farm homes, more mind-stimulating farms because of the use of fertilizers, pedigreed seed and stock, better farm management; wiser care of the soil; hence more satisfying homes, more contented homes; more farms and farm homes relieved of much of their physical burdens, hence more peaceful homes. Contention in the family, you know, for the most part comes from over-wrought muscles and nerves, from working too long hours.

Had I my life to live over, I would want the privilege of being brought up on a farm. I would want parents and teachers there to make me wise in the ways of the things about me -- plants and birds, rocks, insects, clouds and sky. I would want work -- but not too much -- each day. I would want leisure, sweetened with opportunity to learn, friends with whom to converse occasionally, cities, filled with people, working at good wages with which to buy my farm produce. And, with these things, I know I could live contentedly on the farm to the end of my days.

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